DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 270 CS 502 039

AUTHOR Gantz, Walter; Trenholm, Sarah
TITLE Why People Pass on News Events: A Study of Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion.
PUB DATE Mar 78
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association (Boston, Massachusetts, March 16-18, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Altruism; College Students; *Diffusion; *Information Dissemination; *Intercommunication; *Motivation; *News Reporting; Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS *Communication Research; *News Diffusion

ABSTRACT

In the attempt to examine motivations for the interpersonal diffusion of news events, two sets of data were collected. First, 82 college students completed an open-ended survey regarding their reasons for passing on news events; second, another 200 college students were given the list of reasons previously compiled and were asked to rate their motivational importance. Results showed that interpersonal diffusion appears to be a selective, goal-oriented phenomenon; that it results from a variety of divergent need states, including requirements for social status, information, catharsis, and social contact; and that altruistic motivations are central in initiating the interpersonal diffusion process. Five potential sources of invalidity and limitations on the extent that these results can be generalized are presented, and four tables of research results are appended. (CC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153270

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Why People Pass on News Events: A Study of Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion

Walter Gantz
Department of Communication
SUNY-Buffalo

Sarah Trenholm
Department of Speech
Northern Michigan University at Marquette

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Walter Gantz
Sarah Trenholm

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Presented to the Mass Communication Interest Group of the Eastern Communication Association at their annual convention in Boston, Mass., March 16-18, 1978.

CS502039

Why People Pass On News Events: A Study of Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion

All of us, with some degree of frequency, have turned to others and said, "Hey, did you hear the news about _____?" While the role of interpersonal communication in the news diffusion process has been well documented (e.g., Deutschmann and Danielson [1960], Greenberg [1964], Hill and Bonjean [1964], Mendelsohn [1964], Levy [1969], and Steinfatt, Gantz, Seibold, and Miller [1973]), the function of these communication efforts has largely been ignored. This study represents an attempt to examine motivations for interpersonally diffusing news events.

Four studies (Fink and Noell [1974], Gantz and Miller [1974], O'Keefe and Kissel [1971], and Gantz, Trenholm, and Pittman [1976]) have included research on the reasons why people interpersonally disseminate the news. The Fink and Noell and Gantz and Miller efforts focused on self-oriented or self-gain motivations. Fink and Noell expected anxiety to be positively related to affiliative preference (the desire to talk to others) and affiliative behavior (the number of people spoken to). In their study of the attempted assassination of George Wallace, anxiety was a significant correlate of the two affiliation dependent variables. Gantz and Miller anticipated that individuals would diffuse news events and engage in discussions about the events in order to reduce dissonance when confronted with non-congruent news. In their study of the Agnew resignation, null findings forced the researchers to speculate on other antecedents to interpersonal diffusion efforts: "to celebrate with attitudinally similar others and gloat over dissimilar others." The O'Keefe and Kissel and Gantz et. al. studies included mention or investigation of the role of other-oriented, altruistic motivations. O'Keefe and Kissel examined the news of President Eisenhower's death. The reason most frequently cited by respondents who interpersonally diffused the news was altruistic in nature; respondents "felt this to be an important event and therefore they should inform others and make them

aware of it." Gantz et. al. focused on the unexpected death of a well known American runner, Steve Prefontaine. In their study, a majority of respondents who interpersonally diffused that news cited either of two categories of altruistic motivations for their communication efforts: "knew other was interested" and "to give information to others."

Although these four studies implicitly assumed some regularity and logic to the interpersonal diffusion process, none attempted to examine the range and importance of series of these motivations. Instead, each either focused on or discussed the role of a particular motivation the researchers found theoretically or empirically interesting. Thus, despite these efforts, the following questions remain:

(1) To what extent is interpersonal diffusion of news events a selective, purposive, non-random phenomenon? Here, concern is with determining the extent to which people engage in interpersonal diffusion in order to fulfill consciously articulated needs and goals (either for themselves or others).

(2) What are the range and underlining dimensions of motivations for passing on news events to others? This question obviously is dependent on the first. If it is the case that the interpersonal diffusion process is goal directed, then toward what goals are individuals motivated in passing on news events? Can a range of motivations be isolated? Is there agreement among persons on the importance and frequency of these motivations? Is it possible to determine meaningful dimensions of motivations?

(3) To what extent is altruism a key motivating force in the interpersonal news diffusion process? Here, the concern is with the orientation of motivations. Do people engage in interpersonal diffusion for primarily self-oriented reasons (e.g., in order to reduce intrapersonal dissonance or to enhance themselves in the eyes of others) or do people orient themselves to others' needs in passing on news events (e.g., to aid the other in some way)? The O'Keefe and Kissel and

Gantz et. al. studies suggest that at least for tragic news events, interpersonal diffusion is frequently the result of altruistic motivations. Left unanswered, however, is the role of these motivations in other, non-tragic, types of news.

This study attempted to address the three research questions listed above.

Methods

Two assumptions underlined the research procedures employed. First, it was assumed that individuals can accurately recall and assess their motivations for interpersonally diffusing news events. Thus, direct use of respondent self-reports formed a large part of the research strategy. Second, it was assumed that a comprehensive and linguistically compatible list of motivations could be developed and that respondents could accurately rate this list. Thus, two waves of data collection were required--one to generate the list of motivations, the other to measure the role of each motivation in the interpersonal diffusion process.

Wave 1: The first wave of data collection served to develop a comprehensive list of motivations for interpersonally diffusing news events. Respondents (n=82) were University of Buffalo undergraduates enrolled in Speech Communication 100 in the Fall of 1975. Each respondent was given a self-administered survey instrument. The instrument included an explanation of the purpose of the research ("...we're trying to find out why people tell other people 'hey, did you hear about_____?' ..."). Following the explanation, respondents were asked to "think for a moment about the times you passed on, or 'diffused', a news event to someone" and "write down the reasons why you passed on news to other people." Space was provided for up to 5 reasons for each respondent. A list of 19 motivations which best fit these responses was developed. It was found that responses could be reliably coded into these categories. There was an

86% rate of agreement (across over 300 responses) between the two researcher's independent codings. For those cases in which there was initial disagreements, subsequent agreement was reached by re-examination of the categories and wording of responses. Nineteen responses either did not fit into any of the categories developed (e.g., "to gently break startling news") or did not make any clear motivational sense (e.g., "to make the news more interesting I change some facts"). These responses were clumped together in a 20th category, "other". In addition, 8 respondents appeared to confuse some of their motivations for diffusing the news with a description of the event itself (e.g., "the news was humorous"). These were coded "description of the news event". Table 1 presents the list of motivations generated along with the number of respondents mentioning each reason. The researchers decided to include all 19 categorized motivations in the second wave of data collection; the less frequently cited motivations were included because they (1) appeared to be equally valid reasons for interpersonally diffusing news events (2) were considered to be influential and/or theoretically interesting by the researchers, and (3) increased the range of motivations to be examined.

An attempt was made to phrase the 19 motivations in a vernacular which paralleled as closely as possible actual first wave responses and which would be understandable to respondents in wave 2.

Wave 2: The second wave of data collection served to answer the descriptive and theoretic questions which stimulated and guided this research effort. Respondents (n=199) were University of Buffalo undergraduates enrolled in another basic communication course (Speech Communication 101) in the Fall of 1975. There was no overlap of respondents in waves 1 and 2. As in the first wave, respondents were given a self-administered questionnaire which they filled out in class. After an explanation of the research effort, respondents were

presented with the list of 19 reasons "other people gave us" for diffusing news events and asked to indicate "(1) how important /each/ reason usually is when you pass on information about news events, and (2) how frequently /each/ reason is your main motivation when you diffuse news events." In responding to the importance of each reason, respondents were told that "zero equals not at all important and 100 equals very important" and asked to "put down some value between 0 and 100 that corresponds to the importance of /each/ reason to you." In responding to the frequency with which each reason was the main motivation for interpersonally diffusing news events, respondents were asked to "put down some value between 1 and 4 where 1 = very infrequently, 2 = somewhat infrequently, 3 = somewhat frequently, /and/ 4 = very frequently." Respondents were given an opportunity to indicate any confusion in either wording of motivations or use of scales. Respondents appeared to experience little difficulty in completing the instrument.

Results

Descriptive analytic techniques (means and frequency of responses per category) were utilized in order to examine the relative strength and salience of each of the 19 motivations measured. The mean importance scores for the motivations varied considerably; whereas "because I think the other person would be interested" received an average importance score of 78.44, the mean score for "to rub it in" was only 23.98. Along with the other-oriented, altruistic, "because I think the other person would be interested" motivation just cited, two self-oriented motivations, "because it was important or interesting to me" and "so that I could get more information and feedback about the event" also were perceived as quite important (means were 76.45 and 70.36 respectively). Along with "to rub it in," the least important motivations appeared to be "to see if the other person is up to date on the news" ($\bar{x}$= 28.74), "just because the person was there

at the moment" ($\bar{x}$= 34.72), "to pass time" ($\bar{x}$= 35.52), and "to make a good impression on the person" ($\bar{x}$= 39.96). Table 2 provides the mean responses for all 19 motivations.

How frequently is each motivation the main reason for interpersonally diffusing news events? Responses to this question were consistent with responses to the importance measure. "Because I think the other person would be interested" ($\bar{x}$= 3.33) and "because it was important or interesting to me" ($\bar{x}$= 3.29) were regarded by respondents as most frequently their main motivation; approximately 90% of the respondents felt these to be main motivations at least "somewhat frequently". "To rub it in" ($\bar{x}$= 1.51), "to see if the other person is 'with it' or up to date on the day's news" ($\bar{x}$= 1.64), and "just because the other person was there at the moment" ($\bar{x}$= 1.79) were least frequently the main motivation for interpersonally diffusing news events; fewer than one of every five respondents evaluated each of those reasons as being at least "somewhat frequently" the main motivation for diffusion. Table 3 provides the frequencies and mean responses for all 19 motivations.

As indicated above, motivations evaluated as important tended to be evaluated as more frequently the main motivation triggering interpersonal diffusion, with the converse also true. "Because I thought the other person would be interested" received the highest mean importance score and the highest mean frequency as main motivation score. Second and third, in importance and frequency, were "because it was important and interesting to me" and "so that I could get more information and feedback about the event." Table 4 provides a comparison of the 10 motivations ranked most important with those ranked most frequently the main motivation for interpersonal diffusion.

As a whole, these descriptive data suggest the following:

(1) Interpersonal diffusion appears to be a selective, non-random phenomenon. The one motivation apparently reflecting non-selectivity in the choice of interpersonal diffusion partner, "just because the person was there at the moment", was given little credence by respondents; its mean importance (34.72) and frequency (1.79) scores were extremely low. A second motivation less directly suggestive of non-selectivity, "to pass time," also ranked poorly, averaging 36.52 on importance and 1.90 on frequency. While several other motivations could be applied to interpersonal diffusion with strangers (e.g., "to show I'm informed about the day's events", "to see how the person will react to the news"), the researchers regarded these as unlikely motivations for approaching strangers coincidently within earshot.

(2) Interpersonal diffusion is the result of a variety of divergent need states. For example, the 10 most important and 10 most frequent main motivations (recall Table 4) reflect individual informational ("so I could get more information and feedback about the event", and "because it was important or interesting to me"), affective ("because I'm happy that the event occurred", and "because I'm unhappy about the event"), and social needs ("to share my feelings with others", "to see if the other person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in") as well as desires to dominate ("to demonstrate my point") and be of service to others ("because I think the other person would be interested" and "because I thought the other person didn't hear the news").

(3) Altruistic motivations appear to play a major role in initiating the interpersonal diffusion process. The two clearly other-oriented motivations, "because I think the other person would be interested" and "because I thought the other person didn't hear the news", were perceived of as important (means of 78.44 and 62.41 respectively) and were frequently the main motivation for interpersonal diffusion (87.9% and 70.8% stating those reasons as at least "somewhat frequently" the main motivation).

(4) The gloat hypothesis suggested by Gantz and Miller does not appear to be generalizable. The one obviously gloat motivation, "to rub it in", was regarded as least important ($\bar{x}$= 23.98) of all the motivations evaluated and cited least frequently ($\bar{x}$= 1.51) as the main motivation leading to interpersonal news diffusion. However, for at least a small segment of our sample (12.6%), this motivation was at least "somewhat frequently" the main motivation initiating interpersonal diffusion.

Subsequent to the descriptive analyses just reported, responses to the importance question were factor analyzed. Here, the researchers attempted to uncover the underlying dimensions of these motivations to interpersonally diffuse news events. A varimax rotated factor analysis procedure (SPSS Principal Factoring with Iteration) yielded four factors with eigenvalues above the traditionally accepted 1.0 level. These factors accounted for 56.9% of the variance in the motivations. Table 5 provides the factor loadings of each of the 19 motivations on the statistically significant factors.

In an attempt to interpret this computerized analysis, the researchers examined each factor, focusing only on those motivations which (1) had their highest loading on the factor, and (2) had a minimum factor loading score of .50. On the basis of these criteria, the following interpretation of the factors is offered:

Factor 1: To establish social status. This factor shows a desire to engage in social interaction, either to establish or improve one's credibility or to test that of others. The suggestion is one of establishing or fitting oneself into the relationship's status hierarchy. Four of the items suggest one-ups-manship ("to make a good impression on the person", "to see if the other person is 'with it' or up to date on the day's events", "to show I'm informed about the day's events", and "to rub it in"). While the other two motivations suggest talking for the sake of talking ("just because the person was there at

the moment" and "to pass time"), these could represent attempts to vie for status positions within the interpersonal relationship.

Factor 2: To satisfy informational and interest needs. This factor emphasizes the need to give and obtain more information and to engage in conversations of interest to the participants. Three motivations met the criteria utilized: "so that I could get more information and feedback about the event", "because it was important or interesting to me", and "because I think the other person would be interested".

Factor 3: To cathart. This factor deals with the need to express one's emotions. The two items meeting the pre-set criteria were "because I'm unhappy about the event" and "because I'm happy that the event occurred".

Factor 4: To establish social contact. This factor suggests a motivation to engage in social interactions with others. While one motivation ("to share my feelings with others") suggests prior interaction with the recipient of the interpersonal diffusion effort, the two motivations more strongly loaded on this factor ("to 'break the ice' or get acquainted" and "to see if the person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in") suggest the diffusion effort as the modus operandi for initiating a desired interpersonal relationship.

Four motivations did not meet the .50 factor loading criterion: "to change the other person's attitude", "to see how the other person would react to the news", "because I thought the other person didn't hear the news", and "to demonstrate my point".

As a whole, the factors that emerged suggest that respondents do not make sharp distinctions between other or self-oriented, altruistic or self gain motivations as the researchers considered possible. Rather, motivations appear to be classified on the basis of function.

Discussion

This effort attempted to answer three research questions. On the basis of the two waves of data collection and analysis, answers to these questions seem fairly clear-cut.

(1) To what extent is interpersonal diffusion of news events a selective, purposive, non-random phenomenon? In answering this question, an appraisal of its converse seems of value. If interpersonal diffusion were a non-selective, non-purposive, random phenomenon, then respondents generally would (1) exhibit great difficulty trying to recall and describe why they diffused news events, (2) consistently report about a small range of "just because" kinds of motivations, (3) evaluate the purposive motivations presented to them as relatively unimportant, and (4) evaluate the motivations reflecting more random interpersonal diffusion patterns as relatively important. None of this occurred. First, when given the opportunity to write down the reasons why they passed on news events to others, almost all respondents quickly were able to articulate at least one or two different, purposive motivations. Second, few of these responses would fit into a non-purposive "just because" category. Third, a number of the 19 categories of motivations measured were evaluated as important. Finally, the one obviously non-selective in communication partner motivation ("just because the person was there at the moment") and one less clearly non-purposive motivation ("to pass time") were evaluated as neither important nor as frequently the main reason for the interpersonal diffusion effort. As such, it seems clear that interpersonal diffusion of news events is most often a deliberate and selective communication effort.

(2) What are the range and underlining dimensions of motivations for passing on news events to others? The 19 categories of motivations derived by the researchers by no means represents a complete or exhaustive list of motivations

for this communication phenomenon. Rather, it represents a synthesis of over 300 different phrases and intentions provided by a small sample of respondents. Thus, it is quite possible that with a different set of respondents, an additional number of motivation categories would be needed. On the other hand, the range of motivations generated appears extensive and suggests that individuals engage in a particular communication behavior-interpersonal news diffusion- as a result of very divergent needs and desires. (However, the data in no way suggest that an individual is similarly motivated to interpersonally diffuse different news events.) The four factors that emerged from the factor analysis (to establish social status, to satisfy information and interest needs, to catharct, and to establish social contact) appear to encompass the gamut of motivations that might stimulate interpersonal news diffusion. Indeed, they seem to reflect many of the purposes of mankind's communication efforts, that is, to develop and express one's self and be a member in one's social environment.

(3) To what extent is altruism a key motivating force in the interpersonal news diffusion process? When given the opportunity to list their reasons for interpersonally diffusing news events, at least one response from 50 of the 82 respondents in wave one was coded into the altruistic "because I think the other person would be interested" category; at least one response from 28 of those 82 respondents fit into the category "because I thought the other person didn't hear the news". These were the first and third most frequently cited categories by respondents in the first wave of data collection. In wave 2, responses to these motivations indicated that both were perceived as very important and quite frequently the main motivation for interpersonal news diffusion efforts. As a whole, these data suggest that altruistic motivations play a major role in the diffusion of news. One can only speculate on the type of news events respondents thought about when filling out the survey instruments. However, since no tragic (e.g., assassination or death) news occurred shortly before the instrument was utilized, the researchers suspect that respondents were evaluating these

motivations across a broader range of news events than the single type of tragedy studied by O'Keefe and Kissel and Gantz et. al. It is paradoxical then, that the media which so frequently air death and destruction and are so frequently accused as causal agents of aggressive attitudes and behaviors, are here the stimulant of altruistic communication behaviors.

Despite the researchers' satisfaction with the research design employed, five potential sources of invalidity and limitations of generalizability are acknowledged. These are presented below.

First, this study assessed motivations to interpersonally diffuse news events without asking respondents to focus on any particular news event or type of news. Thus, it is possible that the technique utilized may well reflect these motivation states in general, but not accurately portray the role of individual or sets of motivations for any specific, concrete news event. Moreover, it is possible, although the researchers think not plausible, that respondents filled out the survey instrument focusing on one set of news events (e.g., tragedies). In this case, the findings would be limited to the set of events considered by respondents when they answered the news diffusion motivation questions. The methodological alternative which would allay these doubts is, unfortunately, more time consuming and expensive--an assessment of motivations on an event by event basis.

Second, while the researchers hope the responses accurately represent the motivations which initiated prior interpersonal news diffusion efforts, most of the analyses hinged on responses to motivations provided by the researchers. Thus, it is possible that the data represent immediate, out of context, responses to an appealing set of motivations rather than representing the result of a careful comparison between the motivations listed and the motivations recalled by each individual which previously stimulated the individual to diffuse some news event. However, since the motivation categories were derived from

open-ended, non-prompted responses, this potential source of invalidity seems less foreboding.

Third, the motivations assessed can be arranged on some continuum of social (un)desirability. The researchers suspect that the more purposive (e.g., "so that I could get more information and feedback about the event") and altruistic (e.g., "because I think the other person would be interested") motivations were viewed by respondents as more socially acceptable stimulants of interpersonal news diffusion than those either less purposive (e.g., "to pass time") or those involving self-agrandizement (e.g., "to show I'm informed about the day's events"). Thus, evaluation of the motivations could be a function of what the respondents felt was acceptable or appropriate rather than what the respondent felt was an accurate statement of prior motivation states. To counter this possible source of invalidity, respondents were not asked to identify themselves in any way (e.g., name, student number, demographic attributes) on the survey instrument. It is hoped that such anonymity reduced a normal tendency to look good and please the researcher.

Fourth, interpretation of these data was sometimes a difficult and not straightforward task. For example, respondents evaluated the motivation "to rub it in" as not important and not frequently their main motivation for interpersonally diffusing news events. These findings can be interpreted in (at least) four ways. (1) The motivation may not be an important stimulant of interpersonal diffusion. (2) The motivation may be crucial in the interpersonal diffusion process for only a select segment of the population who obtain some satisfaction in "rubbing it in". (3) The motivation could be important but simply underrated by respondents because they regarded acknowledgement of those motivations as socially unacceptable. (4) "To rub it in" could be important for some subset of news events (e.g., political and sports contests) but nc for those generally considered by respondents in their deliberations. Thus, varying interpretations of the

importance and frequency of main motivations findings are not without justification.

Finally, generalizing from college freshmen and sophomores is usually a risky endeavor. While no claim is made that these findings apply to all kinds of folks, the college sample used did include several night sections which contained a sizeable proportion of older students. No significant differences in responses were found between the classes almost entirely composed of young adults (e.g., late teens, early 20s) and those containing a larger enrollment of older students (e.g., those in their 30s, 40s, and 50s). Thus, generalizing these findings to other populations can proceed, albeit with caution.

In short, while there are some doubts about the validity of this work, the researchers feel confident in the methodology employed and findings arrived at. Interpersonal diffusion of news events does appear, in fact, to be a selective, purposive, frequently altruistic communication phenomenon.

Table 1: Respondent Generated Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion of News Events

Reason	Number of Respondents Citing the Reason
To demonstrate my point	4
To show I'm informed about the day's events	12
Because I thought the other person didn't hear the news	28
To see if the other person is "with it" or up to date on the days events	2
Because I'm happy that the event occurred	2
To rub it in	4
Because I'm unhappy about the event	4
Because I think the other person would be interested	50
To make a good impression on the person	11
To see if the person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in	2
To "break the ice" or get acquainted	14
To share my feelings with others	9
To change the other person's attitudes	4
Just because the person was there at the moment	1
Because I'm confused about the event	2
To pass time	30
Because it was important or interesting to me	21
So that I could get more information and feedback about the event	19
To see how the person will react to the news	16

Table 2: Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion of News Events: Importance of the Reason

Reason	Mean Response
To demonstrate my point	61.96
To show I'm informed about the day's events	44.04
Because I thought the other person didn't hear the news	62.41
To see if the other person is "with it" or up to date on the day's events	28.74
Because I'm happy that the event occurred	63.09
To rub it in	[illegible]98
Because I'm unhappy about the event	60.[illegible]
Because I think the other person would be interested	78.44
To make a good impression on the person	39.96
To see if the person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in	57.93
To "break the ice" or get acquainted	55.52
To share my feelings with others	67.02
To change the other person's attitudes	46.57
Just because the person was there at the moment	34.72
Because I'm confused	50.92
To pass time	36.52
Because it was important or interesting to me	76.45
So that I could get more information and feedback about the event	70.36
To see how the person will react to the news	51.96

Table 3: Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion of News Events: Frequency Reason is Main Motivation

Reason	Percentage Responding: Very Infrequently	Somewhat Infrequently	Somewhat Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean
To demonstrate my point	14.6	30.7	42.2	12.6	2.53
To show I'm informed about the day's events	37.6	26.9	25.9	9.6	2.08
Because I thought the other person didn't hear the news	10.1	19.1	44.7	26.1	2.87
To see if the person is "with it" or up to date on the day's events	59.3	23.6	10.6	6.5	1.64
Because I'm happy that the event occurred	10.6	22.1	36.7	30.7	2.87
To rub it in	66.2	21.2	8.1	4.5	1.51
Because I'm unhappy about the event	10.6	24.1	45.7	19.6	2.74
Because I think the other person would be interested	3.5	8.5	39.2	48.7	3.33
To make a good impression	37.2	35.2	21.6	6.0	1.97
To see if the person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in	15.1	31.7	41.2	12.1	2.50
To "break the ice" or get acquainted	23.1	29.1	31.2	16.6	2.41
To share my feelings with others	10.6	20.1	43.7	25.6	2.84
To change the other person's attitudes	30.2	40.2	24.6	5.0	2.05
Just because the person was there at the moment	45.5	34.8	15.2	4.5	1.79
Because I'm confused	13.1	44.7	34.2	8.0	2.37
To pass time	40.4	33.3	21.7	4.5	1.90
Because it was important or interesting to me	2.5	10.6	42.2	44.7	3.29
So that I could get more information and feedback about the event	6.0	18.6	40.2	35.2	3.05
To see how the person will react to the news	18.3	36.0	35.5	10.2	2.37

Table 4: Comparison of 10 Most Important Motivations and 10 Most Frequent Main Motivations

Reason	Rank on Basis of Importance	Rank on Basis of Frequency as Main Motivation
Because I think the other person would be interested	1	1
Because it was important or interesting to me	2	2
So that I could get more information and feedback about the event	3	3
To share my feelings with others	4	6
Because I'm happy that the event occurred	5	4.5
Because I thought the other person didn't hear the news	6	4.5
To demonstrate my point	7	8
Because I'm unhappy about the event	8	7
To see if the other person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in	9	9
To "break the ice" or get acquainted	10	10

Table 5: Varimax Factor Loadings of Motivations for Interpersonal Diffusion of News Events

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
To make a good impression on the person	.71	-.03	.11	.30
To see if the other person is "with it" or up to date on the day's events	.64	.07	.10	.12
Just because the person was there at the moment	.62	.27	.00	.17
To show I'm informed about the day's events	.61	-.00	-.12	.13
To rub it in	.55	-.15	.32	-.02
To pass time	.53	.22	-.04	.14
To change the other person's attitudes	.47	.10	.27	.14
To see how the person will react to the news	.47	.42	.01	.21
So that I could get more information and feedback about the event	.05	.76	.09	.15
Because it was important or interesting to me	.04	.60	.37	.25
Because I think the other person would be interested	-.03	.52	.43	.34
Because I'm confused	.25	.44	.25	.01
Because I'm happy the event occurred	.04	.15	.75	.02
Because I'm unhappy about the event	.05	.16	.73	.02
Because I thought the other person didn't hear the news	.08	.23	.36	.22
To "break the ice" or get acquainted	.32	.18	.02	.70
To see if the person is interested in the same topics and events I'm interested in	.31	.14	.04	.57
To share my feelings with others	.11	.41	.28	.53
To demonstrate my point	.16	.07	.24	.36
Proportion of Variance	.30	.13	.08	.06

References

Paul Deutschmann and Wayne A. Danielson, "Diffusion of Knowledge of the Major News Story," Journalism Quarterly, 37:345-55 (1960).

Edward L. Fink and James J. Noell, "Interpersonal Communication Following the Wallace Shooting," paper presented at the International Communication Convention, New Orleans (1974).

Walter Gantz and M. Mark Miller, "Exploring the Motives to Discuss Political News: An Experiment and a Field Study," paper presented at the International Communication Association, New Orleans (1974).

Walter Gantz, Sarah Trenholm, and Mark Pittman, "Death of an American Athlete: The Impact of Salience and Altruism on the Diffusion of News," paper presented at the International Communication Association, Portland (1976).

Bradley S. Greenberg, "Person to Person Communication in the Diffusion of News Events," Journalism Quarterly, 41:489-494 (1964).

Richard J. Hill and Charles M. Bonjean, "News Diffusion: A Test of the Regularity Hypothesis," Journalism Quarterly, 41:336-42 (1964).

Sheldon G. Levy, "How Population Subgroups Differed in Knowledge of Six Assassinations," Journalism Quarterly, 46:685-98 (1969).

Harold Mendelsohn, "Broadcast vs. Personal Sources of Information in Emergent Public Crises: The Presidential Assassination," Journal of Broadcasting, 8:147-156 (1964).

M. Timothy O'Keefe and Bernard C. Kissel, "Visual Impact: An Added Dimension in the Study of News Diffusion," Journalism Quarterly, 42:298-303 (1971).

Thomas M. Steinfatt, Walter Gantz, David R. Seibold, and Larry Miller, "News Diffusion of the George Wallace Shooting: The Apparent Lack of Interpersonal Communication as an Artifact of Delayed Measurement," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59:401-412 (1972).